

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBAN 0175

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y F O R P A R A F I V E

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT,SF
SUBJ: INKATHA SWEEPS KWAZULU ELECTIONS

REF: DURBAN A-6

1. SUMMARY: INKATHA CANDIDATES SWEPT ALL 27 CONTESTED SEATS BY OVERWHELMING MARGINS (THE AVERAGE AN 8-1 RATIO) IN KWAZULU'S FIRST ASSEMBLY ELECTION HELD FEBRUARY 20-24. SIGNIFICANTLY, SUPPORT FOR INKATHA WAS GREATEST IN THE TWO LARGE DURBAN TOWNSHIPS OF UMLAZI AND KWAMASHU WHERE INKATHA CADIDATES DEFEATED SOME WELL-KNOWN OPPONENTS BY MARGINS BETWEEN 15-1 AND 44-1. THOSE ELECTED, INCLUDING THE FIRST THREE WOMEN EVER TO SIT IN THE ASSEMBLY, REPRESENT A MODERNIZING ELEMENT IN THE ASSEMBLY WHICH SHOULD EASE SOMEWHAT BUTHELEZI'S GOVERNING BURDEN AND FREE HIM TO DEVOTE FURTHER ATTENTION TO NATIONAL MATTERS. ANOTHER RESULT COULD BE THE STRENGTHENING OF BUTHELEZI'S POSITION VIZ-A-VIZ THE SAG BY UNDERSCORING THE
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STRENGTH OF HIS HOMELAND GRIP. (PLURAL RELATIONS MINISTER CONNIE MULDER PUBLICLY NOTED THE CLEAN SWEEP BY INKATHA IN COMMENTING ON THE SAG HOMELANDS POLICY IN CAPE TOWN MARCH 14.)
END SUMMARY.

2. THE COMPLETE DOMINANCE OF CHIEF BUTHELEZI AND INKATHA OVER ZULU POLITICAL LIFE WAS DEMONSTRATED FEB 20-24 BY THE RESULTS

OF ELECTIONS FOR THE KWAZULU ASSEMBLY IN THOSE ZULU-POPULATED AREAS INCORPORATED INTO KWAZULU. IN THE 14 CONTESTED CONSTITUENCIES WITH 27 SEATS, INKATHA'S CANDIDATES WON ALL SEATS BY, ON THE AVERAGE, AN 8-1 MARGIN. THE CLOSEST RACE, WON BY ONLY A 2-1 MARGIN, WAS ONE WHERE THE OPPOSITION CANDIDATE IS HIMSELF A MEMBER OF INKATHA WHO LOST THE LOCAL INKATHA NOMINATION AND DECIDED TO TEST HIS STRENGTH IN THE GENERAL ELECTION. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT AND CLOSELY WATCHED RACE WAS IN MPUMULANGA DISTRICT WHERE THE INKATHA CANDIDATES WERE OPPOSED BY WELL-KNOWN FOLLOWERS OF THE LOCAL CHIEF, MAPHUMULO. BUTHELEZI AND MAPHUMULO HAVE LONG BEEN POLITICAL OPPONENTS AND INKATHA WAS WORRIED THEY MIGHT LOSE THE DISTRICT (REFAIR). HOWEVER, INKATHA WON BY A 3-1 AND 4-1 MARGIN OVER MAPHUMULO'S CANDIDATES. SIGNIFICANTLY, INKATHA ACHIEVED ITS BIGGEST VICTORIES IN THE TWO LARGE URBAN TOWNSHIPS ADJACENT TO DURBAN, WHERE IT ELECTED SIX CANDIDATES BY MARGINS VARYING FROM 15-1 TO 44-1 IN THE FACE OF SOME WELL-KNOWN AND POPULAR OPPOSITION.

3. BESIDES THE 27 WINNING CANDIDATES A FURTHER 28 INKATHA NOMINEES WERE ELECTED UNOPPOSED. THESE 55 COMPRISE THE FIRST ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE KWAZULU LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND WILL NOW JOIN 74 OTHER ASSEMBLY MEMBERS NOMINATED BY REGIONAL COUNCILS OF CHIEFS. THESE 74 HAVE ALREADY PLEDGED PERSONAL LOYALTY TO BUTHELEZI, THOUGH SOME REMAIN OPPOSED TO THE THREAT THEY SEE INKATHA POSING TO THEIR TRADITIONAL DOMINANT ROLE IN RURAL LIFE.

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4. THE ELECTION MARKED THE FIRST TIME MOST ZULUS HAVE VOTED FOR "HOMELAND" REPRESENTATIVES, THOUGH TOWN COUNCIL ELECTIONS HAVE BEEN HELD FOR SEVERAL YEARS IN SOME OF THE URBAN TOWNSHIPS. REGISTRATION FOR THIS ELECTION TOOK OVER A YEAR AND RESULTED IN A REGISTRATION OF ONLY 600,000 OUT OF A ZULU VOTING-AGE POPULATION OF 1.7-2 MILLION. IN THE ELECTION AN AVERAGE OF 38 PERCENT OF THE REGISTERED VOTERS IN CONTESTED DISTRICTS TOOK PART. THIS SEEMINGLY LOW FIGURE OF REGISTRATIONS AND VOTING IS ATTRIBUTED TO THE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE MORE TRADITIONAL ZULUS OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ZULU CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATE (A PART OF THE REGISTRATION PROCESS-REFAIR) AS WELL AS THE LACK OF MANY CLOSE RACES TO CATCH VOTERS' INTEREST.

5. IN ADDITION TO DEMONSTRATING THE SUPPORT FOR INKATHA AMONG THE ZULU PEOPLE, THE ELECTION ALSO SERVED TO INJECT A NEW, MORE MODERN AND PROGRESSIVE ELEMENT INTO THE HERETOFORE TRADITIONALIST, LETHARGIC AND POLITICALLY INERT KWAZULU ASSEMBLY. THOSE ELECTED INCLUDE A NUMBER OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED PEOPLE INCLUDING THE FIRST THREE WOMEN MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY, WHO SHOULD ASSIST BUTHELEZI IN THE GOVERNING TASK AND FREE HIM TO PURSUE NATIONAL GOALS SUCH AS THE SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK ALLIANCE.

6. COMMENT: THE ELECTION WAS FORCED ON KWAZULU BY THE SAG AS PART OF THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE HOMELAND FOR EVENTUAL INDEPENDENCE AND WAS THEREFORE RESISTED FOR YEARS BY BUTHELEZI, INKATHA AND THE ASSEMBLY. IT WAS CONTEMPLATED WITH RELATIVE COMPLACENCY AND DISINTEREST BY MANY OF INKATHA'S LEADERS, WHO NEVERTHELESS MOUNTED AN EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN IN THE MONTH BEFORE THE ELECTION. INKATHA'S ATTITUDE WAS BEST SUMMARIZED BY ITS SECRETARY-GENERAL, DR SIBUSISO BENGU, WHO TOLD THE POL COUNSELOR AND A CONGEN OFFICER SEVERAL MONTHS AGO THAT AS AN AFRICAN HE SAW NO REASON FOR THE ELECTION- "WE KNOW WHO WILL WIN"- BUT THAT TO CONFORM TO SAG REQUIREMENTS AS WELL AS WESTERN POLITICAL IDEALS THEY WOULD GO THROUGH WITH THE EXERCISE. NEVERTHELESS THE RESULTS CONFIRM AND REINFORCE THE IMPRESSION OF THE OVERWHELMING SUPPORT BUTHELEZI AND INKATHA
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ENJOY AMONG ZULU PEOPLE. THE OUTCOME WILL UNDOUBTEDLY MAKE MORE DIFFICULT ANY EFFORT THE SAG MAY MAKE TO PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE SENTIMENT AMONG THE ZULUS BY BACKING LEADERS OPPOSED TO BUTHELEZI (SUCH AS CHIEF MAPHUMULO). IT SIMILARLY WILL MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT POLITICALLY FOR THE SAG TO ACT AGAINST BUTHELEZI WITHOUT UNDERCUTTING THE BASIS OF THE SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN THE EYES OF SOUTH AFRICANS, PARTICULARLY THOSE HOMELAND LEADERS WHO ARE STILL EXPECTED TO FOLLOW TRANSKEI AND BOPHUTATSWANA THROUGH THE SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT TRENCH TO INDEPENDENCE.
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